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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower
Developments in Indochina*

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**Recent Communist Logistical
and Manpower Developments
in Indochina**

Hanoi continued to send supplies, including tanks, to South Vietnam last week. With the rainy season now intensifying, however, the peak periods of logistical activity in Laos and Cambodia are well past. The heaviest concentrations of supply activity continue to be in South Vietnam's Military Region (MR) 1 and in the tri-border area of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese may have now completed the logistical corridor inside South Vietnam stretching from the DMZ to the Central Highlands, thus expanding their logistical options. The recent deployment of the headquarters of two important logistical commands to positions along the corridor suggests that it will be used during the wet season.

Combat troops were again detected moving south in the North Vietnamese Panhandle, probably heading for MR 1. At the same time, personnel of two NVA divisions are rotating out of Quang Tri Province for rest and refitting.

Note: Comments and queries regarding this memorandum are welcomed. They may be directed to [redacted]

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DISCUSSION

Recent Logistical Developments

North Vietnam

1. Despite reports of rising rivers and some muddy roads, the North Vietnamese continue to move supplies south through the North Vietnamese Panhandle. Weapons and ammunition are among the shipments, which also include petroleum, quartermaster items, and possibly building materials. The current activity in the Binh Tram 18 area around Vinh involves both the shuttling of cargo among storage areas there and the movement of supplies toward northern Laos or South Vietnam.

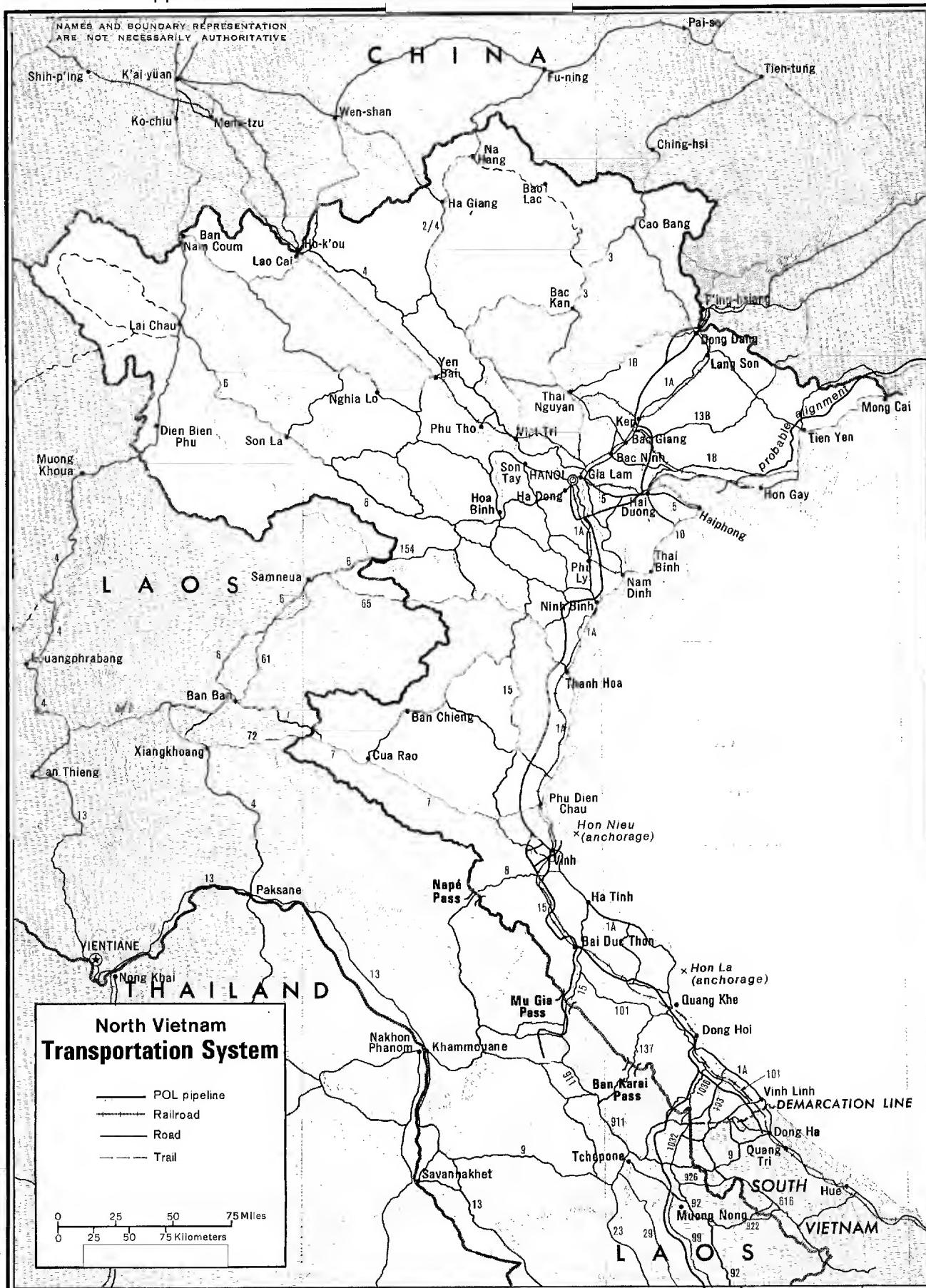
2. Following the pattern of recent months, the heaviest detected logistical activity in southern North Vietnam is in the Binh Tram 26 area, around Dong Hoi. An average of almost 100 vehicles daily - slightly more than half southbound - transited a vehicle checkpoint within the binh tram's area between 17 and 23 May, some carrying munitions. The binh tram has characterized its current efforts as "urgent" and has noted that vehicles are being moved day and night. Complementing the vehicle activity, barges are being loaded with cargo in the Quang Khe area for delivery to an unspecified location. We have reported previously that the North Vietnamese have established new facilities at Dong Ha in South Vietnam's MR 1 for receiving cargo delivered by barge.

3. Evidence that tanks are again on the move through southern North Vietnam continues to accumulate. Since 22 May, numerous references to tanks have been noted in Binh Tram 26 communications and have included queries about the "arriving tank convoy" and the "status of the heavy duty ferry." By 26 May, some of the tanks had apparently transited the Troc River crossing. At least 15 tanks are involved. The tanks probably are destined for northern MR 1, where they will augment existing inventories.

Southern Laos and Cambodia

4. The overall pace of NVA logistical activity in southern Laos appears to be declining as the rainy season tightens its grip on the region. There are indications that some major elements of the NVA logistical structure in the southern Laos/Cambodia area are expanding their responsibilities inside South Vietnam, a sign that normal dry-season resupply efforts in Laos are drawing to a close.

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5. Activity on the entry corridors to southern Laos has fallen to a low level. Roadwork continues, however, possibly to facilitate local resupply activities during the summer months. Some segments of Route 12 just south of the Mu Gia Pass have recently been widened, as have short segments of Route 912 south of Ban Karai. Roads in the Laotian border/western DMZ area are being graveled and repaired to accommodate continued activity.

6. In the central Laotian Panhandle, photography continues to reflect a decline in logistic activity on Route 99, the main north-south corridor, and NVA Group 472, the senior logistical authority in the central Panhandle, has shifted some of its vehicles to areas controlled by Groups 473 and 470 (northern South Vietnam and the extreme southern Laos/northeast Cambodia area). Moreover, one element north of Tchepone reported recently that it had completed 12 vehicle buildings and that a number of vehicles had gone to repair stations. This could be an indication of vehicles being mothballed for the summer.

7. The heaviest current activity in Laos and Cambodia is concentrated in the tri-border area. Photography showed increased numbers of vehicles using the main north-south routes south of Saravane, and vehicle activity is at a very high level through the tri-border into South Vietnam's Kontum Province. Recurrent rains have left some roads muddy and rutted, but they do not appear to have hindered activity substantially.

8. In northeastern Cambodia, most roads remain serviceable and are supporting moderate levels of vehicle activity. There are also signs that the Communists will soon be prepared to shift a large portion of their rainy season logistical burden to the waterways. Recent photography revealed hundreds of sampans along an 80-mile stretch of the Tonle Kong River, and as of early May, one North Vietnamese boatyard on the Mekong reportedly held some 80 small motor boats for rainy season use. [redacted]

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[redacted] this yard is a supply base for materiel shipped from the Stung Treng area.

South Vietnam

9. Communist logistical activity in most of South Vietnam appears to be continuing unimpeded. More than 2,300 supply vehicles transited two vehicle checkpoints in northeastern Quang Tri Province during the period 17-23 May. The cargoes and destinations were not revealed, but some supplies are apparently moving south from northern Quang Tri to the A Shau Valley area, as heavy vehicle activity continues on the major roads in western MR 1.



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10. The North Vietnamese may have now completed the logistical corridor within South Vietnam from the DMZ to at least the Central Highlands. The northern part of the corridor -- which includes Routes 6086, 6089, 616, and 548 -- has been the primary route for supplies moving to Communist forces in northwestern MR 1 for the past year, and by late April this year, COMINT showed supplies moving from the DMZ to the A Shau Valley. At the same time, south of the A Shau, Route 614 was being extended, and clearing was under way on Route 14. As of 30 April, COMINT indicated that the final 10-mile section of road linking these two would be completed by 29 May. The new road system lies east of the mountains and thus will be less affected by the heavy rains that impede logistical activity in southern Laos and Cambodia during the summer months.

11. The headquarters of two major NVA logistical commands in the southern Laos/Cambodia area have moved into the highlands area of western South Vietnam, presumably to control activity along the corridor. On 24 May, COMINT indicated that Headquarters, Group 471, which had been operating south of Saravane, was in the process of redeploying to Kham Duc, South Vietnam, a position which would place it astride Route 14 on the new corridor. Headquarters, Group 470, which had been located in the Laos/Cambodia border area has also moved, and by 26 May it was located in Pleiku Province, just south of Route 19, a position from which it could oversee activity on both the new north-south corridor and the important Route 19 link between Cambodia and South Vietnam. To facilitate operations inside South Vietnam, elements of Group 470 have constructed numerous new storage facilities in the B-3 Front in the past several months, and it now appears that a major subordinate of the Group -- newly reactivated Binh Tram 51 -- is operating in the B-3 Front area.

12. In the southern half of the country, COSVN's attempts to procure substantial quantities of supplies within South Vietnam are having some success. In MR 3, rear services personnel have reportedly been tapping such large urban markets as Saigon, and some North Vietnamese main force units have been ordered to northern Long Khanh Province to aid in the protection of "greatly increased" local procurement of supplies by the Viet Cong.

13. COSVN recently underscored the emphasis on local procurement by issuing orders to province and district level cadre to implement an "economic offensive" against the South Vietnamese government. The cadre are to approach high-ranking South Vietnamese officials, offering them greatly inflated prices for supplies such as rice, medicine, machinery, and gasoline, which reportedly are unavailable in sufficient quantities.

Recent Manpower Developments

Personnel Infiltration

14. Infiltration of combat forces to the northern part of MR 1 continued during the past week. Groups 4014 and 4016 with some 1,300 personnel were detected departing from Vinh. Including gap-fills, this raises the total number of personnel who have started south since 27 January to about 24,500. Since the resumption of combat infiltration to South Vietnam was noted on 12 May, after an interval of two months, it is estimated that nine regular groups with some 5,000 troops have entered the pipeline in North Vietnam. The 1972/73 infiltration estimate now stands at 93,000, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Infiltration Starts, by Season

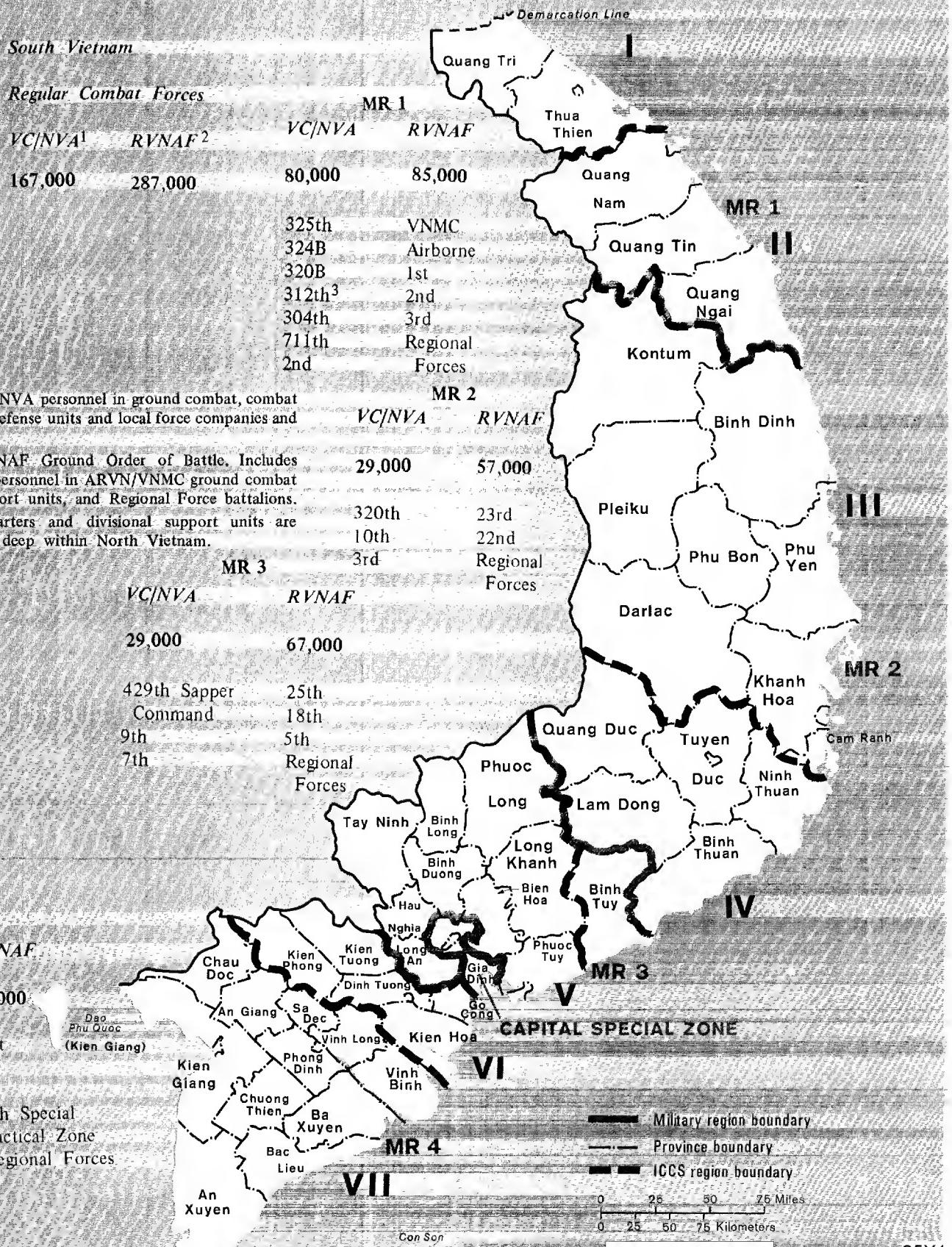
Destination	1 Sep 71 - 27 May 72	1 Sep 72 - 27 May 73
Total	121,000	93,000
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	22,000	33,000
MR 5	17,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	38,000	26,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	14,000	11,000

15. The North Vietnamese also maintained the flow of special-purpose personnel. Five new groups with a total strength of more than 25 were detected moving through the Vinh area last week. Special purpose as well as regular infiltration starts since 1 January, by week, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
**Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973**

	Total ¹	Special- Purpose ²
1-7 Jan	4,700	400
8-14	3,700	350

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam



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Table 2

**Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973
(Continued)**

	Total ¹	Special-Purpose ²
15-21	6,100	500
22-28	4,000	150
29-4 Feb	6,300	400
5-11	3,100	250
12-18	2,000	850
19-25	500	500
26-4 Mar	750	750
5-11	1,300	300
12-18	550	550
19-25	650	650
26-1 Apr	300	300
2-8	275	275
9-15	500	500
16-22	150	150
23-29	1,000	0
30-6 May	1,775	275
7-13	1,100	100
14-21	2,350	50
22-27	1,825	25

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001 through 7009. Assuming that these groups departed between 1 January and 10 March, some 4,500 combat troops would be spread over the departures estimated for those weeks.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength but which have been assigned an average strength of 35.

Unit Redeployments in South Vietnam

16. COMINT of 23 May located the Headquarters, 66th Regiment of the 304th NVA Infantry Division, in the central DMZ area, suggesting a continued commitment of that unit to South Vietnam. Beginning in mid-January 1973, elements of the 66th Regiment were identified in North Vietnamese civil communications in the southern North Vietnamese Panhandle, a possible indication that the unit was withdrawing. The new information suggests, however, that the regiment has been rotating personnel between North Vietnam and South Vietnam in a routine rest and refitting operation -- not a redeployment. The 304th Division's other regiments are

also apparently still committed to Quang Tri Province. Reconnaissance elements of the division have been operating in western Quang Tri Province at least through April, and in early May there were references in communications of the 377th NVA Air Defense Division to providing air defense support to the 304th Division in Quang Tri Province.

17. Recent COMINT provides further evidence that the 320B NVA Division has undergone a change in status. The headquarters of the Division has not been observed in communications with the B-5 Front or with two of its subordinate regiments (the 48B and 64B) in recent weeks. Although this could suggest a withdrawal of the 320B Division to North Vietnam, other evidence – including COMINT references to the division's presence in Quang Tri Province through mid-May – suggests that most of the 320B Division remains committed to South Vietnam. [redacted] has indicated that the division's units were scheduled in March to begin rotating back to North Vietnam for refitting. This may account for the alteration in communications patterns.

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Manpower Developments in Cambodia

18. Khmer Communist communications of late May indicate the possible existence of a new regiment – the 175th -- on the east bank of the Mekong between Phnom Penh and Neak Luong. This would bring to seven the number of Khmer Communist regiments identified in the last two months. Five of the regiments are now east and southeast of the capital along both banks of the Mekong.

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